DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 070 HE 019 388

AUTHOR	Glenny, Lyman A.
TITLE	State Coordination of Higher Education: The Modern Concept.
INSTITUTION	State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.
SPONS AGENCY	Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	27p.
AVAILABLE FROM	State Higher Education Executive Officers, 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 310, Denver, CO 80295 ($7.00).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Advisory Committees; Board of Education Role; *Budgeting; College Planning; *Coordination; Educational Cooperation; Governance; *Higher Education; *Program Evaluation; Public Policy; State Agencies; *State Boards of Education; *Statewide Planning

ABSTRACT

Coordination of higher education as practiced in three similar organizational forms is assessed: the statewide governing board, the regulatory coordinating board, and the advisory board. Attention is directed to why coordination is important, criticism of coordination, kinds of organizations used, the accomplishments and weaknesses of the agencies, and pending issues for coordination. Two broad categories of agencies are common: a single statewide governing board for all public colleges and universities (eliminating all the individual institutional boards); and a coordinating board juxtaposed between the governor/legislature and the institutional governing boards that embraces all of higher education, public and private. Both categories of agencies are headed by boards consisting primarily or exclusively of lay persons appointed by the governor for overlapping terms. The strengths of state coordination for the following major functions are addressed: planning, budgeting, program review, and policy analysis. Issues for the 1980s and beyond are considered, including attracting the most able to the teaching profession, competition for students and funds between public and private institutions, and the consequences of the popularity of large public research universities. (SW)

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State Coordination of Higher Education

The Modern Concept

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1985

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$7.00

Contents

v Foreword

State Coordination of Higher Education: The Modern Concept

1 Why Coordination?
4 Who Questions the Need for Coordination?
7 Forms of Coordination
11 The Strengths of State Coordination
14 Weaknesses in Coordinating Practice
16 Issues for the 80s and Beyond
18 Conclusion

23 Footnotes

Foreword

IN 1959, Lyman Glenny, in a book entitled *Autonomy of Public Colleges,* suggested that a new organizational form just emerging in the states — the state coordinating board — held the key to protecting autonomy *and* insuring public accountability.

NOW after nearly three decades, Glenny assesses the "modern concept" of coordination as practiced in three similar organizational forms — the statewide governing board, the regulatory coordinating board, and the advisory board. In the essay which follows, he candidly describes the successes and shortcomings of this unique enterprise.

LYMAN'S essay was prepared with the intention that it would serve primarily to orient new board members to the concepts and tools of coordination. As it turns out, he has provided us all with valuable insights into the nature of our endeavor.

WE gratefully acknowledge the support provided by The Frost Foundation for the publication and distribution of this essay, which was provided as part of their 1984–85 grant for the Inservice Education Program of SHEEO.

JAMES R. MINGLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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State Coordination of Higher Education: The Modern Concept

COORDINATION of state higher education is alive and well in the great majority of states. Governors, legislators, and most public and private heads of colleges and universities view it favorably. In a few states the going has been rough at times, with agencies being attacked, reorganized, or abolished, only to have new ones arise out of felt necessity. In sociological terms the coordinating agency is now "institutionalized" as a part of state government. This essay deals with the whys and hows of coordination, the kinds of organizations used, the powers exercised, the accomplishments and weaknesses of the agencies and pending issues for coordination.

Why Coordination?

OVER time, the critics, primarily the state research universities, have opposed state coordination, claiming that it "lays on them the dead hand of bureaucracy," "averages down to mediocrity the best institutions," "stifles initiative," and "frustrates the exercise of autonomy." Despite these criticisms, some of which continue today, the states continue to strengthen the agencies or to make way for new ones. The states do not do so capriciously nor do they purposefully design the impairment of their highly valued research universities. Rather, state law makers react to what they see as unseemly competition among the colleges and universities for students, for new programs, and for funds. They try to bring order to the inevitable chaos of institutional parochialism in pursuing self-interests.

ALL state leaders want outstanding institutions, thoroughly educated students, well-conducted research, and continued development of new knowledge. They believe these ends are better achieved through coordination and planning than by allowing each institution, at will, to create new centers, add new programs, and adjust admission standards and tuition as if such independent actions in the aggregate promote the best interests of the state. Today some agencies include in their planning the private colleges and universities, proprietary technical and trade schools, industrial training cen-

ters, and other organizations, thus encompassing the whole of postsecondary education.

THE initial thrust toward statewide coordination came at the beginning of this century — in Iowa, Florida, and a few other states — and gained impetus at the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929. In 1933 the Carnegie Foundation cited this situation in Montana:

> Vigorous and hostile lobbies sought appropriations for each educational institution. Educational lobbying became so intense during the early sessions . . . that it was difficult for the legislators to consider important State matters in other divisions of government. This educational competition and head-on collision of State teaching units . . . interfered with the development of service and the building of State consciousness. Effort, energy, and money which should have been employed constructively for the enrichment of institutional life and the improvement of public service were wasted in legislative and statewide rivalries.[1]

IT was common for an institution in the district of the chairman of the appropriations committee to be well-funded, while institutions in districts from which legislators had little political influence were poorly funded.

STATE policy makers, motivated by a need for economy and efficiency, used strong legal language to empower the new boards "to consolidate, suspend, and/or discontinue institutions, merge departments, inaugurate or discontinue courses, and abolish or add degrees."[2]

AFTER World War II, the states confronted the results of the "baby boom" — the "tidal wave" of students and institutional requests for vast, almost unlimited, expansions of programs, faculties, and facilities. The new cascade of students almost immediately raised the aspirations of virtually all faculties and administrators. Junior colleges tried to become four-year institutions; state colleges wanted to be universities with doctorate and advanced professional degrees; second-tier universities sought to emulate the leading state research university in breadth of instructional program and in research; and the research university sought new medical, veterinary, and other professional schools along with branch campuses in favorable locations in the state. All of them wanted new classrooms, laboratories, dormitories, and support facilities.

"The question is no longer whether coordination should be attempted but what form of organization and which set of powers will do the job."

THE leading state university, the dominant power in almost every state, found the lesser institutions challenging its "lion's share" of the state resources for higher education while

squabbling among themselves for the remainder. Institutional aggrandisements occurred on an ad hoc, expedient basis not guided by a state plan or set of goals for higher education, and seldom under a campus development plan. The private colleges, while expanding, did so more slowly than the public ones, and they expressed strong fears for their existence if each public institution were to spread out as it wished. The traditional coordinators of higher education, the elected politicians, were frustrated in making judgments on programs, funds, and facilities for each of the aspiring institutions and the dollar total to assign higher education versus other state services.

THE need for improved coordination became recognized in state after state. "It only needed to be determined whether it would proceed in the tug-of-war of legislative process and institutional log-rolling or be regularized under an agency of the executive branch."[3]

THE coordinating boards created during these years also came about for reasons of economy and efficiency, which grew out of continued institutional competitions. As the Carnegie Foundation stated in 1976, "Much more money is now spent on higher education . . . public interest, as a result, has been heightened . . . more intercampus rivalry exists — community colleges versus comprehensive colleges and universities versus research universities; public campuses versus private campuses."[4]

LAW makers concluded that an agency other than themselves could better understand and protect the fundamental values of higher education while also preserving state interests. They believed in the autonomy of institutions as a

> . . . "way of preserving and encouraging diversity, elasticity, and flexibility of education programs and of stimulating managerial ingenuity and creative drive . . . [making] overall planning and coordinating absolutely necessary, for without it, the aggressive management expected of autonomously governed institutions will result in a competitive duplication . . . of programs and a multiplication of services, facilities, and campuses throughout the state that will tend to destroy the effectiveness of all higher education."[5]

IF colleges and universities have autonomy and the state has ultimate power over their very existence, tension between the two forces is inevitable. Through coordination, the state "seeks not to eliminate tensions but to maintain them in a healthy balance."[6] These relationships are seldom harmonious, and coordinators now stand in the no-man's land between the two parties.

IN states with any more than a half dozen public colleges and universities, the coordinating agency, in one form or another, is here to stay — an imperative statement not credible a mere ten years ago. During the fifties and sixties, when many new statewide governing boards were added and the vast majority of coordinating boards were first

authorized, a good deal of skepticism prevailed about their usefulness. The dynamics of change in organizational form and powers in the intervening years continue today, but coordination as a concept is thoroughly institutionalized in the states. The question is no longer whether coordination should be attempted but what form of organization and which set of powers will do the job. Coordination grew out of felt necessity by governors and legislators in settling funding and program issues among competing colleges and universities. Today, that competition remains intense and the postsecondary education policy issues confronting the state are far more complex than 20 years ago.

Who Questions the Need for Coordination?

JOHN Millett observes that criticism of coordination continues today at about the same level of emotionalism as 40 years ago during its nascent state.[7] That level was high but the needs of the state for the management of orderly growth were too great, and coordination has grown ever since. Earlier criticisms of the entire concept of a statewide coordinating agency have diminished to continuing criticism of general state intrusions and activities of particular coordinating agencies. For the most part, coordination's present day critics accept statewide planning and policy groups as inevitable, but may take exception to particular outcomes of their operations.

"Complaints about detailed regulation probably should be directed to the legislature or to state agencies other than the coordinating agency."

INSTITUTIONAL spokesmen — the heads of the major state research universities, primarily — were the most vocal critics of coordination 30 or 40 years ago. Today, their ranks still produce critics. Their original concern was understandable. The history of higher education in the United States until after World War II was almost totally one of highly independent campuses subject to sporadic state controls or specific legislative operational decisions. Resistance to arbitrary governmental interference led to the development of concepts of institutional autonomy and academic freedom in a known organizational context. Coordinating agencies, unknown actors on the stage, upset settled concepts of academic governance. We now know that effective coordination frames the protection of institutional independence and academic freedom in an increasingly interrelated and crowded educational world. The rhetoric of the early opposition remains, however, and is applied to

complaints that seem more directed to ineffective coordination than to the concept of coordination itself. There appear t[illegible]e two categories of complaints:

1. Chronic complaints about detailed state (and federal) rules and regulations relating to accounting and reporting; and

2. Acute or situational complaints founded on coordinating agency regulation concerning new programs and buildings, and more recently, modification or termination of existing academic programs.

COMPLAINTS about detailed regulation probably should be directed to the legislature or to state agencies other than the coordinating agency. Administrative procedures imposed directly by state law and applied to all state agencies, such as uniform accounting, controls on bidding and central purchasing, investment regulation of appropriated funds, and reporting of data on affirmative action, are truly burdensome on the time of administrators and staff. Federal laws and rules complicate the situation immensely. Most of these laws or rules are administered by the state executive agencies. Even before widespread coordination, Moos and Rourke asserted that these administrative controls "represent a grave threat to the fradition of the free college." Further they claimed that "at its worst, a tightly coordinated system of higher education can leach quality and originality" and that "the tendency of all topside controls is to squeeze the sovereignty of the college in the conduct of its vital responsibilities."[8] Recent critics are more temperate and also less specific. A colloquium of a New York consulting firm reported in 1978,

> Some of us believe that there is a present and substantial threat to the independence of our institutions by existing governmental actions and attitudes; others of us think that, on balance, governmental action has been constructive and reasonable to date but are concerned about the potentiality for future abuses."[9]

IN 1980, a national commission wrote,

> There has been a general and pervasive erosion in the autonomy of public governing boards and their presidents to manage interal affairs as a result of governmental regulatory initiatives."[10]

PROCEDURAL minutiae, bothersome to administrators, do not affect autonomy; state interventions in substantive affairs closely tied to the role and mission of institutions do.

ACUTE or situational complaints arise out of operational decisions growing from policy. Who makes policy? Toward what objectives? To be achieved by what educational means? The answers to these questions are at the heart of the disagree[illegible]nts. Should each institution have absolute independence in answering the questions — without regard to answers of other autonomous institutions? Equally important, even if all institutions should agree, does the state (the society) have goals that might rightfully

exceed the collective desires and interests of the institutions? Should these goals be recognized and provided for? Should the state allow institutions to wastefully duplicate programs, roles, and functions? Should the state work toward optimum service from scarce resources? The answers to these questions favor the interests of society rather than the interests of the institutions, whether public or nonpublic. "Legislatures, having reached this conclusion, establish coordinating agencies for the purpose of making higher education more reflective of the public interest, more rational in its development, and more careful in husbanding rsources."[11]

UNQUESTIONABLY, institutional autonomy is violated when a highly desired program, school, center, or building, after long faculty planning and compromising, is not approved by the coordinating agency. However, such infringements are gauged against the needs and priorities of the state itself as well as those of other institutions of higher education. State coordination aimed at overall rational planning and decision making, rather than fostering individual institutional ambitions and unbridled expansions, fulfills the state public interest in the orderly development of higher education. The

"Voluntary coordination broke down when issues of great import to the presidents were raised."

legislatures, the ultimate coordinators, choose to establish an agency that understands the benefits of protecting and promoting institutional autonomy in as many situations as possible while concurrently attempting to achieve rather specific state goals.

AS noted above, some critics fear the general specter of the state without identifying particular offices or agencies that interfere with institutional freedoms. Perhaps more culpable than the coordinators are the state budget office of the governor and the various analytic and budget staffs of legislative committees. These agencies are newer and can be much more powerful than the coordinating ones because on a day-to-day basis their analyses and recommendations on proposed legislation go directly to the law makers. They are increasingly staffed by well-trained professionals, who, in dealing with budgetary and policy matters, may infringe on autonomy by serving a particular state interest. These staffs are formidable opponents when they differ with the coordinating agency staff over policy. In most states, all three staffs — executive, legislative, and coordinative — try to work together on data, budgets, and policy, but by the very nature of the persons they represent, frequent differences occur and political settlements ensue.

THE state also may have a building authority that designs and constructs all public facilities, a student-aid agency that administers both state and federal financial-aid programs, and other agencies that have policy and

administrative relationships with the colleges and universities.

IN the aggregate, state influence over the substance of higher education could be as bad as the critics claim. Over the years, and in every state, unwarranted interventions by some state office, usually the legislature, have been identified. However, the critics rarely seem to fear current episodes, but rather some possible catastrophe in the future. No doubt, a disaster could occur but, after 40 years, no state has been cited for having "leveled institutions to mediocrity" or stilled the imaginations and innovative spirit of the faculties. Perhaps the repeated warnings of impending danger have in fact prevented state officials and coordination boards from more untoward interventions than manifested to date. Or, perhaps some critics have found their pleadings obviated by state adoption of a single governing board — a board which the research university tends to dominate. Under voluntary coordination, of course, this power arrangement was strongly resisted by the other state institutions.

SOME quite vocal critics have become advocates of coordination. The president of a small public university in a midwestern industrial state stopped criticizing the concept of coordination when he was named the head of the new state coordinated system. When a very critical president of a university in a southeastern state became the executive of a consolidated state system, all criticism of coordination waned away. One successful corporate leader said after a session with some college and university presidents, "The politics of big business is like dealing with Boy Scouts compared to higher education!" The penchant for power permeates all organizational life and often the criticism of state coordination is no more than, "If I (or my institution) had the power you have, all would be well."

Forms of Coordination

THE specific organizational form and the powers and duties conferred by law to coordinating agencies vary widely from state to state. Indeed, no two states are alike in their form of coordination. However, one can identify two broad categories of agencies:

1. A single statewide governing board for all public colleges and universities (eliminating all the individual institutional boards) and

2. A coordinating board juxtaposed between the governor/legislature and the institutional governing boards that embraces all of higher education, public and private.

TODAY, both categories of agencies are headed by boards consisting primarily or exclusively of lay persons appointed by the governor for overlapping terms ranging from 4 to 12 years. The differ-

ences between the categories rest on the powers of the agency and its position in relation to the governor and legislature.

BOTH the laws establishing coordinating agencies and their actual operations depend on a variety of social, economic, and political factors in the historical development of the state. This great diversity in factors influencing higher education and its governance forecloses a standard pattern of coordination: the conditions in each state determine form and powers.

"Coordinating boards must cajole, importune, and persuade with data and logic to achieve many goals."

INITIALLY, in a number of states, the presidents of the public colleges and universities joined together in a voluntary organization when legislatures resisted institutional lobbying for funds and programs and asked these educational leaders to agree among themselves on distribution. But voluntary coordination broke down when issues of great import to the presidents were raised — admission standards, new professional schools, new levels of degrees, or new branch campuses. They quickly gave way to statutorily established agencies, usually composed of presidents and governing board members along with some public at-large members. These, too, failed to arrive at equitable settlements, and the major issues continued to go to the legislature. Eventually the legislature reduced or removed institutional board representation and gave the new agency broader advisory powers or, more likely, regulatory powers.

THIS sequence of events occurred in many states, and at different times depending on a particular state's need and readiness for stronger coordination. Often, a distance exists between the legal provisions binding the agency and its actual undertakings in state/higher education relationships. Over time, even though statutes and formal operating procedures remain little altered, the normal experience in any central agency is that objectives, relationships, and methods will change.

The Single Statewide Governing Boards

Of the two categories, the oldest and most powerful is the single statewide governing board for all the public senior colleges and universities (and sometimes the community colleges in the state). This board applies the traditional panoply of powers and duties of a governing board to the whole public system. In the most centralized and strongest systems, the chief officers of the individual campuses must report to the chief executive officer (a chancellor or president) of the system. In more decentralized systems, campus presidents individually report directly to the

board, and a board-employed secretary maintains the agenda for the board but has no line authority over the presidents.

ADVANTAGES. The advantages of this form of coordination lie in the governing powers of the board. The board may initiate new programs, new campuses, and new services or discontinue existing programs or services. It hires and fires presidents of institutions, sets admission standards and tuition rates, establishes personnel policies and develops the budgets for each campus in the system. It may coordinate every activity of every campus, however important or obscure.

DISADVANTAGES. The chief disadvantage of a statewide governing board is that the governor and the legislature see it as speaking only for the aggregate interests of public colleges and universities, not for all postsecondary education. It is not able to objectively advise the state of budget requirements, program needs or appropriate relationships with private institutions and other organizations of postsecondary education. Evidence suggests that politically powerful research universities often control governing board policy. These boards generally cannot act as the public policy advisors to states. There were 14 statewide governing boards in 1960 and 22 in 1985.

"Every state has accrued major benefits through planning."

The Statewide Coordinating Board

THE second category is the coordinating board situated between the institutional governing boards and the political law makers. This less-drastic form of coordination leaves in place the governing boards of each institution or system to carry out the normal academic personnel and management functions while circumscribing activities that cause conflict among the institutions or fail to work toward broader state goals. This category takes two distinct forms, one with regulatory powers and the other with only advisory powers. Those with advisory powers generally perform at least two and often three of the four major functions of the regulatory boards — planning, policy analyses, and program review; they do not develop campus budgets.

REGULATORY boards have the power to approve new programs, new centers, new schools, and new services, and in most cases, to discontinue instructional programs. They also suggest public policies and review (and may consolidate) the budgets of the public institutions or systems of institutions, and make budget and fiscal recommendations to the governor and legislature.

THE legislatures have gradually given up much of their own coordinative power to such boards, and now delegate some authority formerly vested in the institutional governing boards. The role of regulatory coordinating boards

in the budgeting process helps to secure planning and program goals and to maintain the interest and respect of the institutions. It is primarily this enforcement and implementing ability that distinguishes the regulatory coordinating board from the advisory type.

ADVISORY boards' chief difficulty in gaining the respect and confidence of the college and university leadership is their frequent powerlessness to follow through in implementing their recommendations, whether on policy, planning, programs, or budgets. Often, the institutions continue to deal directly with the legislature, where, as previously, the competitive issues are fought out. Now, however, legislators are informed through the data, studies, and recommendations of the advisory agency.

ALL advisory boards are not weak. Some build high confidence, exceeding that of some agencies with regulatory powers, with the political arms of government. Conversely, a few agencies with regulatory powers fail to exercise them, becoming, de facto, a weak advisory council. In 1960, there were 5 regulatory and 5 advisory boards, and in 1985, 7 advisory and 20 regulatory boards.

ADVANTAGES. Both regulatory and advisory coordinating boards protect and promote the broad state interests as against the more parochial interests of the public institutions; provide a uniform, comprehensive, available data base for the significant activities of the colleges and universities; recommend public policy and plans encompassing both public and private post-secondary education; provide an umbrella agency for administration of certain state and federal programs affecting the several types of post-secondary institutions; and conduct statewide planning and policy responsibilities without undertaking the burdensome, attention-consuming task of managing the affairs of one or more individual campuses.

THE regulatory board also can implement much of the policy it recommends to the institutions and to the state government, and can objectively regulate the development of instructional and service programs without partisanship.

DISADVANTAGES. Coordinating boards must use the budget, program approval, the cooperation of rival institutions, and governmental support to enforce policy rather than "ordering" presidents of campuses to comply with policy, as statewide governing boards are empowered to do. These coordinating boards must cajole, importune, and persuade with data and logic to achieve many goals. Some scholars also consider the lack of a supportive constituency a disadvantage.[12] This is so, if the coordinating board does not have the respect of the governor or the legislature or both. But if the board acts as designed, the leaders can be more influential on general state higher education policy than even the most powerful statewide governing boards. While statewide governing boards garner support from students, faculty, alumni, and sporting and cultural activities, their leadership is limited to

public institutions only, and does not extend to the welfare of all postsecondary education.

The Strengths of State Coordination

HAVE the two basic forms of coordination discussed — statewide governing boards and coordinating boards — been effective? Or are some of the critics correct in asserting that state boards are just another layer of bureaucracy standing between the institutions and the politicians but providing no real service?

COORDINATION has been effective. Its accomplishments vary, of course, among states, from one organizational type to another, and from one function to another, and not all will be found in every state. But as one examines the four major functions of coordination — planning, budgeting, program review, and policy analysis — the record is clear.

Planning

PLANNING was not a function of the first coordinating boards and has not been highly salient for the state governing boards, yet virtually every state has accrued major benefits through planning. The roles and missions of institutions are being remolded from "all things to all men" to statements that distinguish one institution from another and that are specific enough to provide guidelines to the state for the allocation of funds, programs, branch campuses, and buildings; for setting admission standards and tuition levels; and promoting affirmative action and open access. Without overarching coordination through roles, missions and plans, the decision on each of these items for each institution probably would be made ad hoc, on fragmented traditional or politically expedient grounds.

PLANNING has preserved diversity among four-year institutions that seemed determined on becoming replicas of the leading state university, and has restrained the efforts of two-year colleges to become four-year institutions. Sound planning has avoided, in most instances, institutional overbuilding of classrooms, laboratories, and dormitories for overzealous projections of enrollment. The contrasts in overbuilding between the public and the private sector can be credited to coordinated planning for the public institutions. Statewide perspectives, applied in planning, have met state objectives of creating diversity while conserving resources.

INTENSIVE planning studies have also helped to assess need for expensive medical, dental, and veterinary schools to meet shortages of professionals in these fields.

Budgeting

NEW practices adopted by the coordinating agencies for developing and managing budgets have contributed much to equitable funding while recognizing differences among systems, types of institutions, and level of programs. Institutional squabbling over "fair shares" of state appropriations was greatly reduced by such practices. More accurate enrollment figures, unit costing, better program definition, and formula funding resulted from intensive joint efforts by the central agencies and the colleges and universities. These activities provided greater accountability through quantitative measures while furthering understanding of arcane budget practices formerly the preserve of business officers and technicians. Formula funding greatly reduced income fluctuations, gave institutions a basis for sound academic planning from one budget cycle to the next, and afforded the state a measure for adequacy of state funding.[13]

"Funding for an institution is now determined by objective measures and analyses rather than by political tilting in legislative halls."

DURING budget cutbacks and drops in enrollments, coordinating boards have had the unrewarding task of applying to institutions the decisions made by the legislature and governor. In general, they have done so being cognizant of marginal costs, essential core programs, and service activities while avoiding partisanship and bias. Very few states have reduced funds to individual institutions by the percentage drop in enrollment.

PERHAPS more than anything else, funding for an institution is now determined by objective measures and analyses rather than by political tilting in legislative halls. Through formulas, a good measure of fairness and equity now prevails in funding. Given this success, supplementing formula budgeting with "quality funding" should be done cautiously to prevent political power rather than academic merit from again becoming determinative.

Program Review

NEW programs have been approved and disapproved under guidelines of the state master plan (or rolling plan) and of the role and mission statements of each institution. To prevent bias or favoritism among institutions, specific criteria, developed in conjunction with the colleges and universities, are employed in reviewing each new program application and each pro-

gram considered for termination. The "unnecessary overlap and duplication" so despised by the legislators has largely been avoided, especially with expensive and esoteric programs. Advanced-degree programs receive exceptionally attentive scrutiny and, to preserve diversity, are awarded only to those institutions previously identified in plans with the particular level and kind of degree. Program approvals go to institutions only after careful review of financial, faculty, and physical resources. Most coordinating and state governing agencies have outright power over programs, have exercised laudatory judgment in new approvals, and rarely have been overridden by appeals to the legislature.

REVIEWS of existing programs have eliminated those of marginal quality or productivity and limited or abolished advanced-degree programs in the less-capable institutions. These actions have redirected resources toward improving quality in the better programs and have increased the confidence of the legislature and governor in the whole state system. Reviews also provide presidents and deans with "the outside leverage to do what they have known for years should be done." Often, public documents summarizing the data and argumentation for review decisions assure equity in treatment and outside knowledge of the result.

IN a few states, coordinating boards have been instrumental in obtaining funds for competitive incentive grants for institutions promoting excellence in a subject area or developing an exciting innovative program.[14]

Policy Analysis

THE role of state coordinating and governing boards as analysts for higher education policy began about 30 years ago. It has become the most important function of advisory boards and is equal to budgeting and planning for the regulatory and governing ones. Politicians and their staffs seek studies, analyses, and recommendations on a variety of subjects of concern to them and their constituents. Such studies abound; they deal, among others, with the effects of tuition on college-going rates of various ethnic or income groups, on retention of students in the several different institutions and programs, on the effects of different admission standards, on student-aid funding levels, on caps on enrollment, and on student flow among the institutions. Farsighted board staffs, on their own initiative, forestall some requests for narrowly conceived studies by initiating their own broader studies of emerging issues having state policy implications.

ANALYSES conducted in a scholarly, objective manner can sometimes lead to friction between the coordinators and the legislators or their staffs, especially if the legislators have preconceived ideas about what results the study should show. Over time, however, these policy-analysis activities have earned coordinating agencies a reputation for fairness, thoroughness and objectivity — much prized by the politicians as a group even though a

few individual legislators may adhere to their biases on particular issues. So useful are policy studies that politicians have steadily increased the scope of activities of the regulatory and statewide governing boards or converted an advisory board into a regulatory one as important new issues and problems arise. A valued by-product of objective policy analysis is that legislators are far less likely to engage in partisan politics on higher education matters.

Weaknesses in Coordinating Practice

COORDINATION is not without problems. Some of these are quite specific to particular states: ambiguously drawn statutes authorizing agency functions; politically powerful institutions; legislative reluctance to delegate controls, or more disturbing, to refrain from parochial, institutional favoritism; and gubernatorial agendas that conflict with plans. Within the agencies, coordination can be ineffective because of the poor quality of board membership or of a weak executive officer or both. Weaknesses appear also in the broader perspective of activities common to all coordinating agencies. Several merit discussion here.

"Boards should recognize the continuing worth and understanding of democratic processes."

- Failure of the board and staff to develop a thoughtful, well-conceived philosophy and role for their relationships with the institutions and with the state. Over and above authorizing statutes, a value and attitudinal framework can guide the agency in its activities. In their activities, boards should recognize the continuing worth and understanding of democratic processes; the invaluable and difficult role of the state politicians in gauging the requirements of higher education against the priorities of other essential state services; and the real need for strong coordination while leaving, as much as possible, autonomy and local decision making at the institutional level. Such a framework, whether in writing or not, provides a reassuring degree of predictability of agency decisions, both for politicians and institutions.

- Unwillingness to involve faculty members and administrators from the institutions in a full and open manner that leads to better and more acceptable policy recommendations. Sporadic or no involvement of such people assuredly hinders real coordination, that is, the harmonious relationships that lead to accuracy, acceptability, and persua-

siveness without the outright use of power.

- Lack of heavy involvement of experts from outside its control — citizen specialists and community and educational leaders. If these are not involved, the agency stands isolated, not creating a temporary or permanent constituency, and not capable of leading. Isolation encourages the impression that all decisions rest on board power rather than on a consensus of not only the higher education community, but of the larger society.

- Too little recognition in program and budget decisions of national and international developments that affect directly the state economy, politics, manpower needs, and institutional resources and direction. Because of this lack of attention, some agencies fail to anticipate events bearing on their responsibility for state higher education, thus delaying proper responses at this level to trends originating out of state.

- For those agencies with regulatory power, the tendency to manage too much detail, to become bureaucratic "data massagers" in operations and, in so doing, fail to meet state needs for aggressive planning and leadership.

- Inability to create conditions leading to a common, well-monitored data base acceptable to the institutions and to the legislative and gubernatorial staffs. Such a base reduces conflict and encourages focus on policy issues rather than the accuracy of competing sets of data.

- Poor continuing contacts with legislators and their staffs on matters of importance, both during sessions and between them, thus failing to overcome the legislative view of the agency as one closely tied to the governor and his budget office.

- Not reminding the world of the raison d'etre of the agency by periodically calling attention to how the agency accomplishes state objectives, to the continuing competition among the colleges and universities, and to the ever-expanding universe of postsecondary education, all in need of coordination. Experience indicates that the legislative and public memory needs periodic reinforcement because the more successful the agency is in achieving effective coordination the more the world sees a harmonious, well-managed system and questions the need for a coordinating agency. That same world looking at quarreling, openly competitive colleges and universities seeks means of improving coordination.

- Not making particular conscious efforts to review operating procedures, budget formulas, program-approval criteria, and other practices for obsolescence or appropriateness given changing circumstances. A task force of in- or out-of-state consultants could aid in this endeavor.

- Failure to take initiative in advising the governor to appoint persons with

particular attributes or skills to the coordinating board, thus attracting members with broad vision and experience and avoiding membership of persons with narrow perspectives.

- Inability of boards to attract outstanding persons for executive leadership. Boards in some states fail to search for and employ executive officers with a thorough understanding of the purposes and functions of coordination, with a philosophy of fairness and impartiality, and with dedication to promoting the interests of the state while understanding and maximizing local governing board autonomy. Superb political and negotiating skills are necessary in dealing with the leaders of colleges and universities, with the political arms of government, with their increasingly well-trained professional staffs, and with the other organizations contributing to postsecondary education. Some board searches for executive officers are parochial rather than national in geographic scope. They are not well-publicized, the position is poorly described, and the candidates are amateurishly interviewed. Of all board functions, this is the most important and one in need of substantial improvement.

"Superb political negotiating skills are necessary."

Issues for the 80s and Beyond

ISSUES in coordination, like those in governing the larger society, rarely get fully resolved. "Resolved" issues often appear later in a new guise under new circumstances. Any listing depends on one's perspective, age, and knowledge of the history of American higher education. To some, all things may be new, to others, there is nothing new, only changed form. The following list of issues neither tries to be exhaustive nor presumes to be prescient. Each issue, I believe, will challenge coordinating agencies for the foreseeable future.

ATTRACTING the most able to the teaching profession. Our inability to attract very able students into the teaching profession at all levels of education, K through Ph.D., has potentially the most serious and long-lasting consequences for societal welfare. National commissions can make recommendations on this problem, but the coordinating agencies and the colleges and universities must take positive, practical steps to improve teacher education programs and to find ways to attract students into them. Similar steps are needed for preparation of college-level teachers. Initiatives must start now, to prevent grave impairment of the teacher corps.

THE consequences of the popularity of large public research universities.

"The need for remedial education is unlikely to fade away for a dozen or more years, if ever."

More and more qualified students continue to apply for enrollment at these institutions, while enrollments at the regional, less prestigious state colleges and universities remain static or fall. Should the state increase the physical and faculty resources at the university even as space becomes available elsewhere? Or should it make the other public institutions more attractive? Should enrollment caps be placed on growing institutions, or tuitions raised, or student flow otherwise regulated? Most probably, states will seek ways to limit additional expenditures for new enrollments at growing universities while exploring ways to fill or to compensate for the empty classrooms of other institutions.

THE tendency for regional state colleges and universities to reclassify upper-division technical and professional courses to lower-division status and to move core liberal arts course requirements to the upper division to compete with community colleges. These actions, accompanied by severe drops in enrollment in graduate-level courses in the same institution, foretell pronounced de facto changes in the role and mission of such institutions without de jure decisions. Coordination calls for attention to such trends and for review of the purposes of these universities.

RESPONDING to a new wave of immigration in some industrialized states (e.g., California, Illinois, New York, Texas, and Florida). What state initiatives will help to overcome language deficiencies and provide access to higher education? (Access remains a serious problem for Black and Hispanic citizens as well.) Often the cultures and family relationships of these new immigrants do not encourage educational participation. Yet up to half or more of the populations of some states are or will be minority. For the future welfare of the society and of the economy, states must assure a participation rate in higher education for these citizens and potential citizens equal to that of the Caucasian population.

COMPETITION for students and funds between public and private institutions. Roughly one-third of the funds of nonpublic colleges and universities comes from public support and the pressure is to obtain more. Student financial-aid programs, federal and state, have generally encouraged students to enroll in private institutions. With static or falling enrollments, and with federal funds decreasing, tension between the two sectors will continue to increase, especially if enrollment in the public sector falls, leaving vacant facilities and little-used faculties while public monies support students in private colleges. Policies put in place now could prevent future harsh words and charges damaging to the welfare of both segments of education.

THE measurement of educational progress. Testing has recently beset the public schools of the nation. Now some

states have adopted assessment exams at the postsecondary level. Some states apply similar tests to students and even to the instructors in teacher education programs. Demands are also made for the national certification of teachers. Though the results of applying such devices are mixed, the pressure will increasingly be on higher education to measure educational progress for college programs of all kinds. This is an area of public policy requiring coordination, at least among all the public institutions.

REMEDIAL education poses questions to coordinators about which institutions should provide remedial classes, at what level of competence, and for how many dollars above budgeted amounts for regular students. The need for remedial education is unlikely to fade away for a dozen or more years, if ever, and state coordinating agencies will abrogate their responsibilities if they leave such decisions to the play of market forces. This confused area literally begs for coordination and legislatures wonder why it is not being done.

REPLACEMENT of obsolete equipment and physical plants. Some coordinating agencies, but all too few of them, have thoroughly studied the many technical issues involved and have developed categories, set priorities, and made recommendations on or adopted schedules permitting phased, orderly replacement of buildings and equipment. Without such actions by the coordinators, the pleas of the institutions for help from the legislature will be responded to like the cry of "wolf!" — a reflection of bad coordination.

COORDINATION of the vast array of adult and technical training. Continuing education and vocational training involves virtually every type of postsecondary education from the high school or YMCA to the large university with extension programs throughout the state. And this wide array is now augmented by rapidly developing industrial training programs. Coordination between high schools and colleges and between private and public colleges has a long history of failure and frustration. State boards should begin with inventories of what is being offered, by whom, for what price, for what period of time, in what locations. The immediate need is to gather more accurate data, determine the merit and quality of the many offerings, and make the information available to the public. No other agency in the state could reliably undertake such an effort and no other one has the responsibility.

Conclusion

ORGANIZATIONS and procedures for conducting coordination continue in a dynamic state. The less power the agency has, the more dynamic the operational milieu. The accelerating trend in the nation is for more centralization of public higher education.

"Should the state increase the physical and faculty resources at the university even as space becomes available elsewhere?"

NO state adopting a statewide governing board has changed this form to one less powerful. Most of these states fall below the median in personal income and in the number of institutions to be coordinated, and most of them have strong legislatures rather than strong governors.

THE advisory agencies, successful or not, give way to regulatory ones with considerable power to plan, budget, and control program development. The successful boards, by the very nature of their persuasive, confidence-building activities, stimulate the political arms to assign regulatory power. An advisory board that fails to satisfy legislators and the governor soon finds itself abolished to make way for a more formidable coordinating structure. A few advisory boards seem destined to survive primarily because of the difficulty of legally placing a regulatory agency over one or more universities with constitutional status.

THE regulatory boards, like the statewide governing ones, have steadily increased in numbers with their greatest growth during the 1960s. These agencies are most often found in states with strong governors, above-median personal income, with many postsecondary institutions of great variety, and a diverse set of political forces working on higher education. Because of this complexity, they seem unlikely to be replaced by a single governing board.

POWERS of regulatory boards increase almost as often as the legislature meets. Some boards resist taking on administrative functions such as those over student aid, licensure of professions, accreditation of institutions, or veterans' affairs, pleading that administrative duties draw attention, leadership, and resources away from critical, direct, coordinating activities. A majority of these boards are able to handle their coordinating duties along with a few important administrative functions. Other boards bog down in the shelter of administrative routines only to find themselves unable to detect trends, foresee emerging issues or conduct vigorous coordination, thus laying themselves open to statutory reorganization — a new board and new staff leadership. Powers of regulatory boards make them almost governing in practice although very few have any influence on the selection of presidents, governing board membership, or the personnel and accounting policies of the institutions.

PRIVATE colleges and universities have largely escaped regulatory coordination, although they often cooperate in state master planning efforts and furnish data on operations and capital expenditures to the coordinating board. By doing so, they can control the expan-

sion of the public sector and can seek increases in student aid and other funding help from the state. The state in turn embraces another large segment of postsecondary education in coordinative planning. The states with regulatory boards rather than state governing or advisory boards are the most liberal in funding private education. They are also the states with the greatest number of private institutions.

COORDINATION of other postsecondary education — programs and courses of the proprietary schools, charitable organizations, and business and industry — has received little attention by the state boards for coordination, either in planning or data-gathering. Yet these organizations now spend more money for postsecondary education than do all the colleges and universities in the nation. Student choices for obtaining training and even liberal education have never been greater, but coordinating agencies have been slow to understand and take into account this "peripheral" education.

BY whatever agency performed, the most successful coordination involves widespread participation by faculty and administrators of the coordinated organizations, experts and lay people from the public and representatives of organizations interested in education. The governor's budget office and the legislative staffs should be involved directly when possible, and kept informed. Involvement means active, full participation in planning, and in developing major procedures for review of programs, institutional expansions, and budget formulas.

COORDINATION remains a fast-rising star in the constellation of state agencies, valued by all concerned parties. It has accomplished much, and much remains a challenge. Its critics are fewer and adherents more numerous. Institutional leaders, especially those in the state research universities, will no doubt continue to warn against undue incursion and violation of institutional autonomy. Coordination should heed this fulsome praise and moderate obtrusive activities while recognizing that, after decades of coordination, research universities have gained vigor and productivity. They have become more valued by their states than at any other time in their history. Coordination has helped these institutions by protecting them against inroads on graduate and professional programs and on research from regional state colleges and universities, and from the remainder of higher education on their funding. Coordinators, through orderly, objective means, appear to have provided all types of institutions with greater funding equity and more security in their roles and missions than they ever would have obtained through unbridled competition in political arenas.

HOWEVER well coordination works, tensions between higher education and the state can never be entirely eliminated, and thoughtful people understand this. The late Stephen Bailey sums up the relationship:

Today, as we perceive this elemental paradox in the tensions between the academy and the state, it is useful to keep in mind its generic quality. For at heart we are dealing, I submit, with a dilemma we cannot rationally wish to resolve. The public interest would not . . . be served if the academy were to enjoy an untroubled immunity. Nor could the public interest be served by the academy's being subjected to an intimate surveillance. . . . Whatever our current discomforts, because of a sense that the state is crowding us a bit, the underlying tension is benign . . . the academy is for the state a benign antibody and the state is the academy's legitimator, benefactor, and protector. Both perspectives are valid. May they remain in tension.[15]

"The most successful coordination involves widespread participation by faculty and administrators of the coordinated organizations."

Footnotes

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